



**Commission  
on Inclusion**

**NC DOA**  
Department of Administration

**NORTH CAROLINA  
COMMISSION ON INCLUSION  
2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

Executive Order No. 24

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## **2020 North Carolina Commission on Inclusion**

Machelle Sanders, Secretary, Department of Administration, Chairperson

**Jenny Black**

President, Planned Parenthood South Atlantic Region

**Henry Cruz Reyes**

Student, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Cristal Figueroa**

Political Director, Poder NC Action

**Michelle Fullerton**

Executive, Bank of America & Member LGBT Executive Council

**Aleshia Hunt**

Student Government Association Financial Advisor, East Carolina University

**Paula Kohut, P.A.**

Attorney, Kohut & Adams, P.A.

**Lydia Lavelle**

Mayor, Town of Carrboro

**Pat Martinez**

CEO, Leadership Strategist

**Barbara Rimer, DrPH, MPH**

Dean, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

**Christy Smith Foster, BSN, RN, JD**

Contracting Officer, FHI 360

**Andrew Spainhour**

SVP, General Counsel, Replacements Inc.

**Cecelia Surratt**

Chair, Human Relations Council, Morganton

**Emily Turner**

Attorney, NC Justice Center

**Reverend Fred Yates**

Mayor, Town of Winfall

## **Background & Introduction**

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On October 18, 2017, Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order 24 (*Policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in state employment services, and contracts under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Governor*). The charge that the Governor set out in this order directed the Secretary of the NC Department of Administration (DOA) to establish the NC Commission on Inclusion (COI), comprised of members from state government, private business, and non-profit organizations.

The duties of the Commission are to assist DOA and the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) in identifying additional policies and measures that would promote inclusion and address discrimination, harassment and retaliation based on Prohibited Grounds. DOA is charged with adopting rules and policies necessary to further the Commission's goals and objectives.

The North Carolina Commission on Inclusion respectfully submits this report which highlights work completed by the Commission since the submission of its 2019 Report.

## **Goal**

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The Commission's goal is to leverage diversity and foster inclusion to deliver the best public service for the residents of North Carolina.

## **Objectives**

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- Identify and share best practices.
- Provide strategies that promote economic efficiency and accountability, and attract, grow, and retain an excellent workforce.
- Identify trends and actions that create a competitive advantage for North Carolina.
- Raise awareness for the importance of diversity and inclusion.

## **2020 Overview**

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The North Carolina Commission on Inclusion met quarterly in 2020. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, only one Commission meeting was held in person at Fayetteville State University. All other Commission on Inclusion meetings were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Despite the pandemic, Commission members remained highly engaged and committed to leveraging diversity and fostering inclusion. Three new members were appointed to the Commission: Aleshia Hunt, Cristal Figueroa, and Henry Cruz Reyes. The

dedication of the Commission resulted in actions primarily focusing on LGBTQ+ issues and the 2020 Census.

The quarterly Commission on Inclusion meetings provided the opportunity for the Commission to hear from key partners and leaders in diversity and inclusion, including:

- Dr. Peggy Valentine, Chancellor, Fayetteville State University
- Dr. Wilson-Norman, Chief Academic Officer, Cumberland County Schools
- Kailey Hill, Principal, Manchester Elementary School, Cumberland County Schools
- LaTanya Pattillo, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor
- Nancy Astrike, North Carolina Office of State Human Resources
- Mike Sprayberry, Director, Emergency Management
- Tammie Hall, Director, Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses
- Thomas A Stith III, NC District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration
- Bob Coats, Governor's Census Liaison, NC Office of State Budget Management
- Kristen Kincade-Coats, Liaison, NC Complete Count Commission
- Suling Walker, Executive Director, NC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Paula Kohut, Attorney, Kohut & Adams, P.A.; Member, Commission on Inclusion
- Emily Turner, Staff Attorney, NC Justice Center; Member, Commission on Inclusion

## **Key Priorities**

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This year, the NC Commission on Inclusion indicated, in addition to the work of its subcommittees, the need to further support LGBTQ+ communities and other vulnerable populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission will continue to uplift best practices and recommend policies in each of the focus areas noted below.

## **Achievements**

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### ***Cultural Competency***

- The Commission supported LGBTQ Pride Month in June. Commissioner Paula Kohut participated in a lunch and learn panel hosted by the Commission and NCDOA with OSHR Diversity and Workforce Services Director Nancy Astrike and Carrboro Councilman Damon Seils.
- The Commission supported Hispanic Heritage Month in September/October. They participated on a panel conducted by NCDOA in October. Commissioner Pat Martinez shared ways her Hispanic heritage influenced her leadership style and commitment to public service.
- Commissioner Pat Martinez was appointed to the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force as a representative for the

Commission on Inclusion. She was selected as the Educational Opportunity subcommittee chair.

- In May, the Commission hosted a working meeting to brainstorm policy recommendations that will create economic recovery from COVID-19 and to inform the Andrea Harris Task Force's deliberations.
- In July, the Commission sent a letter to State Treasurer Dale Folwell urging him not to exclude the specific health care needs of transgender people from the North Carolina State Health Plan.
- Commissioners Paula Kohut and Emily Turner spoke to the Commission in October on healthcare barriers for transgender people, trans etiquette, and proper terminology. This conversation informed the Commission's 2021 policy agenda.

### ***Census 2020***

- Bob Coats, Governor's Census Liaison, NC Office of State Budget and Management, and Kristen Kincade-Coats, NC Complete Count Commission Liaison, presented at the May 20 meeting to provide an update on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the 2020 Census.
- In partnership with the NC Complete Count Commission, the Commission on Inclusion sent a letter urging North Carolina's senators, representatives, and Attorney General Josh Stein to use all means possible to overturn the Trump Administration's July 21 memo, "Excluding Illegal Aliens from the Apportionment Base Following the 2020 Census."
- Attorney General Josh Stein sued the Trump Administration on July 24 for attempting to deny North Carolinians fair representation in the U.S. House of Representatives through an act of unlawful intimidation tactic to discourage people from completing the census. Attorney General Stein responded to the Commission with a letter stating his stance and support of the Commission's goal to achieve a complete count in North Carolina.

### ***Diversity in Disaster***

- Identified the need for comprehensive consideration for diversity and inclusion in disaster preparedness, responsiveness, and recovery.
- Mike Sprayberry, Director, Emergency Management, presented to the Commission on Inclusion during their May meeting on Emergency Management's response to COVID-19.
- Tammie Hall, Director, Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses, and Thomas A Stith III, NC District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration, spoke at the May Commission meeting about how small businesses are being supported during the pandemic.

## **2020 Policy Recommendations**

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The 2020 policy recommendations for the Commission on Inclusion center around the upcoming 2021 priorities. The Commission has identified a need to further support non-binary and transgender peoples. Primarily, these recommendations revolve around gender language usage in the state and normalizing stepping away from the gender binary. Recommendations include:

- **North Carolina to add X/nonbinary on driver's licenses.**
- **OSHR to include non-binary/other as an option on the gender field on state applications and include "preferred pronoun" as an additional optional question.** The COI commends OSHR policy relating to confidentiality of information and optional completion of gender field on applications.
- **NC to allow gender changes on birth certificates through an application process and self-certification.**
- **NC to allow "other" as gender criteria on birth certificates.**
- **Encouraging the normalization of pronoun usage in email signatures, website info, introductions, etc.**

## **2021 Priorities**

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To accomplish the following priorities, the Commission on Inclusion will establish 2021 goals and new subcommittees, and new members will be appointed as deemed appropriate by the Chair/Secretary of DOA. Priorities include:

- Foster care and the needs of LGBTQ+ youth
- Birth certificate reform
- Gender identification and driver's licenses/learner's permits
- Encouraging the culture of pronoun preference
- Explore solutions and support for transgender state employees outside of state health benefits.
- Support the transgender community by highlighting inclusive practices in the workplace and advocating for increased protections for transgender individuals. Host a joint private and public sector forum to highlight inclusive practices and policies for LGBTQ+ employees.

## **2021 Planned Meeting Dates**

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February 17

May 19

September 23

Nov 17